

Background/ Introduction

BACKGROUND:

- Many South Asian languages do not have a word to describe, diagnose, or comprehend depression (Nazroo 1997).
- Psychological problems in South Asian cultures are often attributed to and classified as ghost possession, black magic, or malfunctioning of the head (Battachaya, 1986).
- South Asian cultures adhere to a strict familial hierarchy, revere emotional restraint, and emphasize the importance of prevention of shame (Flaskerud & Liu, 1990; Uba, 1994; Zane & Yeh, 2002). These ideals may come in direct conflict with the Western model of emotional disclosure, oft-practiced in counseling and therapy (Sue & Sue, 2003).

INTRODUCTION:

- South Asian Americans are oft-underrepresented within the greater Asian-American racial group (Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997).
- Conclusions drawn from studies on Asian Americans have been applied to understand South Asian populations, which can lead to misdiagnosing and unsuccessful methods of therapy (Barreto & Segal, 2005; Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004).
- Literature shows a clear link between the underutilization of mental health services in South Asians and their strong cultural stigma of seeking mental health help (Cochrane, R., Hussain, F., 2004).
- In a study comparing South Asian university students and Caucasian university students, South Asians displayed poorer attitudes and greater hesitation toward the use of counseling services for mental health-related problems. (Loya, Reddy, Hinshaw, 2010).
- Existing literature states that negative attitudes toward mental health, therapy, or counseling services may be a defense mechanism that protects the family unit from the social consequences of stigmatization (Loya, Reddy, Hinshaw, 2010).
- However, previous studies have found a positive correlation between levels of acculturation (i.e, more Westernized) in Asian Americans and positive attitudes toward seeking professional mental health help (Atkinson & Gim 1989; Tata & Leong; 1994).
- Though there have been a number of studies on clinical psychological disorders and the role of culture in South Asians in the United Kingdom, and similar studies done on Asians in America, few studies have explored mental health in South Asian Americans (Bhui, Bhugra, Goldberg, Sauer, Tyless, 2004).

Explicit Hypotheses

- 1) Positive attitude toward mental health access will be determined by greater level(s) acculturation.
- 2) Positive attitude toward mental health access will be determined by generational status/length of time spent in the U.S.
- 3) Participant attitudes about efficacy of mental health interventions (psychotherapy, medicine) will be reflected by perceptions of access to mental health care.

Selected References

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Proposed Study

PURPOSE:

The aim of this research is to fill the existing gap in literature about the role of culture and other factors which influence attitudes towards mental health in South Asian-American women. The overall objective of the present study is to examine perceptions towards mental health among multi-generational South Asian (Afghani, Bengali, Bhutanese, Indian, Maldivian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan) women in the greater Houston-area.

METHOD:

Participants: (N = 100-150)

Age Range: 18+

Gender: Female

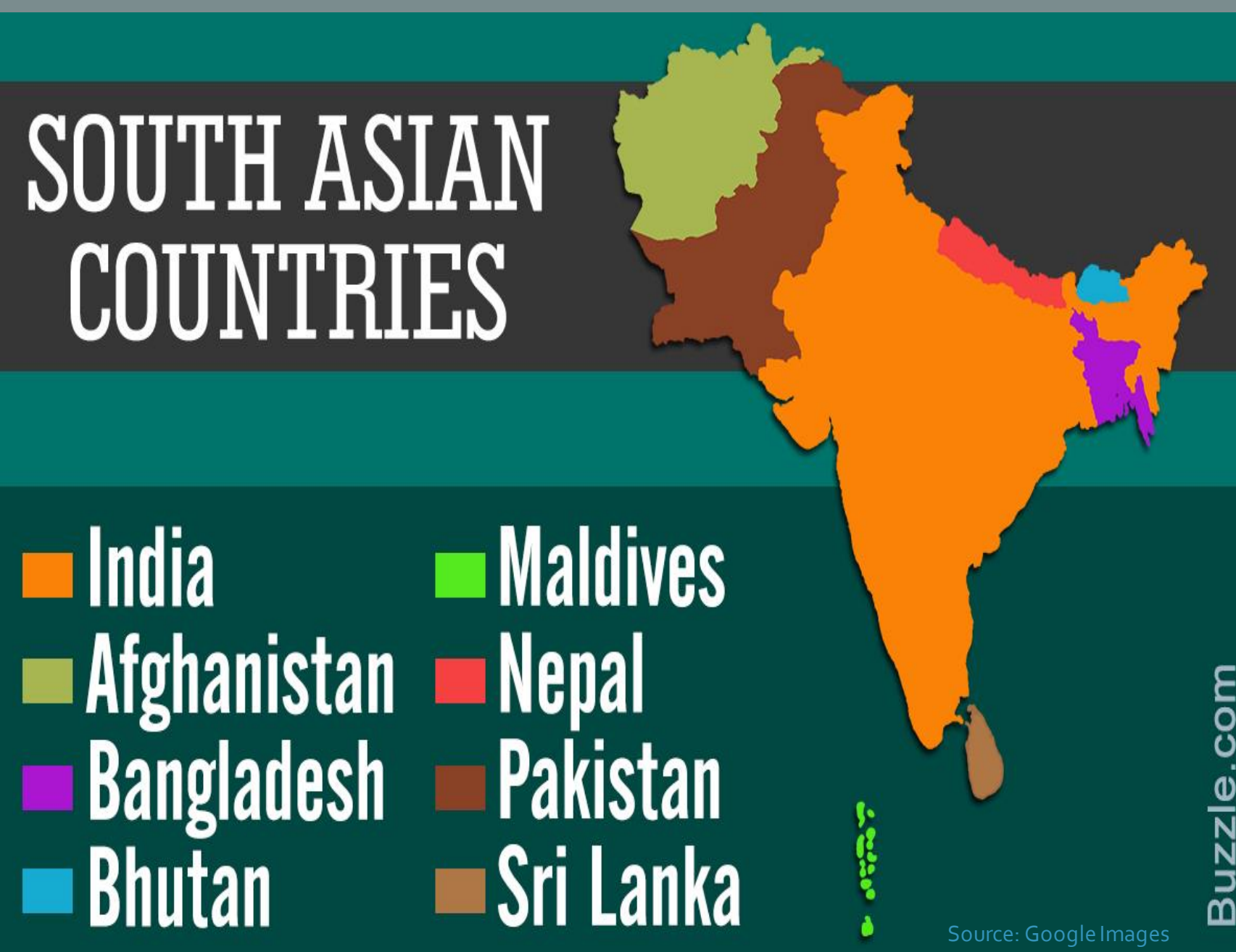
All recruited from across the Greater Houston Area through physicians, cultural organizations, religious institutions, and the University of Houston organizations and student body

Measures adapted from:

- Duke University Religion Index (DUREL; Koenig, Bussing, 1997)
- Cultural Life Style Inventory (CLSI; Mendoza, 1989)
- Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)
- Suinn-Lew Asian American Self ID Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA; Suinn, RF., Lew, Virgil, 1987)
- AO-9 (Attribution Questionnaire; Cooper, A., Corrigan, P.W., & Watson, A.C., 2003).
- Error Choice Test (Michaels, P. J. & Corrigan, P. W., 2011)
- Family Questionnaire (Corrigan, P.W., Watson, A.C., & Miller, F.E., 2006)
- SSMIS-SF (Self Stigma of Mental Illness Scale- Short Form (Corrigan, P. W., Michaels, P. J., Vega, E., Gause, M., Watson, A. C., & Rüsck, N., 2011)
- ES (Empowerment Scale; Rogers, E., Ralph, R., & Salzer, M., 2010)

PROCEDURE:

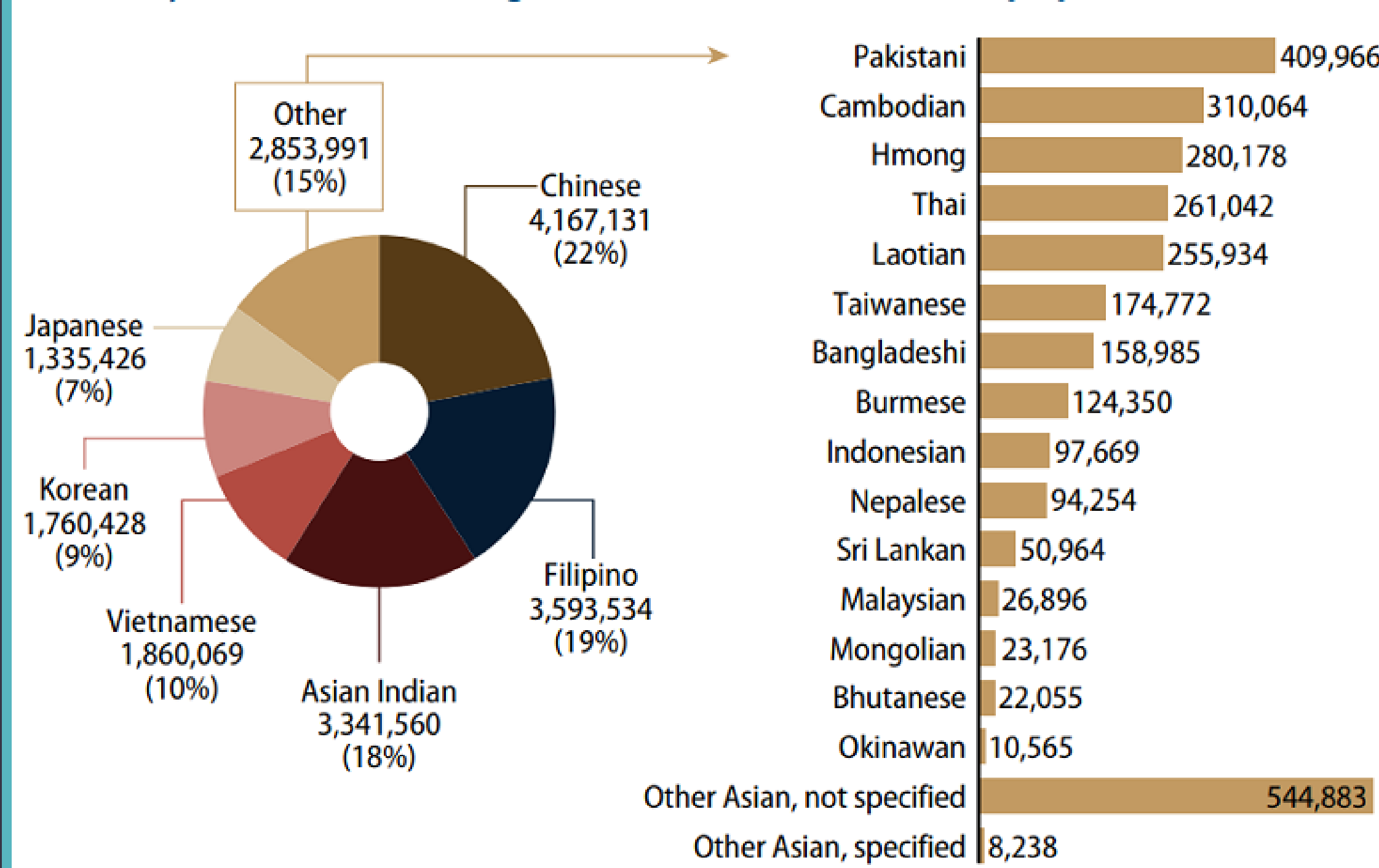
Participants will be contacted via the recruitment efforts listed above. Participants will be provided with a link to access and complete the anonymous online survey. The survey is expected to last been 7-10 minutes. Data collection will continue until December 2018.



Importance

- Despite Asian Americans deemed as the "model minority" implying Asians' success in acculturating to American society with few issues, researchers have highlighted mental health concerns among this population, debunking the 'model minority myth.' (Leong, Wagner, & Tata, 1995; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Yeh, 2002).
- This proposed study will add to that literature, further proving that despite immigrating and acculturating to some aspects of American society, South Asian cultural norms, especially the negative association of seeking mental health help.
- Though the definition of South Asian differs, the definition chosen shows that South Asians constitute over 20% of the global population. According to the U.S Census Bureau, by 2050, Asian Americans will make up 10% of America. A vast majority of this region's inhabitants uphold values shaped by religio-cultural beliefs and practices that differ from those in Western countries.
- As discussed in Patel (2006)'s work, a 10/90 divide exists, in which 90% of publications are by researchers trained in and/or associated with institutions that promote Eurocentric outlooks. This thesis may further studies and an exploration of culturally-tailoring psychological treatment in this under researched South Asian population.

Ethnicity and national origin of the Asian American population, 2012



Source: Bureau of the Census, "Asian alone or in any combination by selected groups, 2012," available at http://factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1/0/en/ACS/12_1YR/B02018 (last accessed March 2014).

